



**family
lives**



Family Lives

About us

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President Rt Hon Lord Justice Thorpe, Chair Anastasia de Waal, Chief Executive Jeremy Todd

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About Family Lives

Family Lives is a leading family and parenting support charity, supporting over 1 million families each year.

Our vision

Families are the foundation of society. All families should have access to non-judgemental support.

Our mission

Family Lives works around the clock to transform the lives of families. Our experience enables us to help families with any problem or challenge that they face. Our trained family support workers offer all adult family members immediate help on the phone, online or in local communities. We use our knowledge to campaign for changes to policy that support family life.

Our history

The organisation was set up by parents for parents following a tragic child protection case in 1973 that brought about the amalgamation of 3 smaller parent support organisations, in an effort to improve access to effective support for parents, prevent harm to children and improve outcomes for children and families.

Our services

We provide a range of services including face-to-face individual and group support, phone-based support and online support, including:

- Parentline, free 24 hour confidential helpline on **0808 800 2222**
- Extended support for complex, difficult issues
- Personalised email service at – parentsupport@familylives.org.uk
- Online advice, live chat, ask the expert, peer support and information on all aspects of family life at www.familylives.org.uk
- Face to face support groups, parenting programmes and workshops

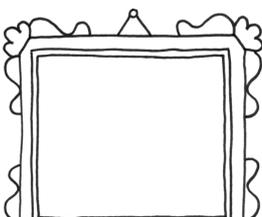


We work in a variety of community settings including schools, Sure Start centres, sporting venues, GP surgeries and criminal justice settings, as well as carrying out outreach work with families sometimes considered as “hard to reach” by statutory services.

We have seven local Family Lives offices in London, Croydon, Hampshire, Gloucestershire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Nottinghamshire and Newcastle (Tyne and Wear). From these offices we deliver local, cost-effective outcomes that have a lasting impact on communities and individuals. We also have a mobile approach, so if you are not near one of our offices, contact us and we will discuss how best to deliver our services to you.

Local and user-focused

Family Lives is committed to providing evidence-based practice adapted to the needs of local families and communities. We continually evolve our services to meet the growing and changing needs of families, particularly the most vulnerable or disadvantaged.



We know that a “one size fits all” approach to supporting families is unlikely to be successful, so we deliver services that are customer led and bespoke to particular client groups. You tell us what you need and we will work with you to deliver it. Our services are designed with users, for users - leading to improved service outcomes for both families and commissioners. Through our local services we help to build community capacity to self-solve issues, rather than relying upon costly government intervention.

Our expertise

We deal with all of the issues that challenge families at each stage of care for a child. Families can contact us about any problem or concern they may have. However, our expertise is focused on four core areas:

- **Family relationships**
- **Health and wellbeing**
- **Education and the family**
- **Family rights and responsibilities**

Working with professionals

We work with a range of practitioners and professionals, including teachers, school support staff, social workers, community health practitioners and primary care workers, providing training and resources on effective parental and family engagement. Our Training and Development Team provide tailored external training packages to organisations and practitioners in the public, private and civil society sectors, in the venue of their choice or online.

“ As one of our invaluable commissioned services in South Tyneside, Family Lives worked with Local Authority, Health and other third sector organisations offering timely and appropriate support to parents/carers and their families. Family Lives were responsive to the demand from partners to deliver the services required of them, and produced very positive results from parents/carers. This service has always been willing and able to undertake training and new challenges to fit within the remit of the commissioning process. We look forward to developing new and innovative methods to enable this partnership to continue through the

Our partnerships

We work closely with a range of specialist or complementary organisations and services, to ensure that the families we support directly receive, or are signposted to, the support they need. In particular, we have service partnerships with the Children’s Legal Centre, Marriage Care, Young Minds and Families Need Fathers via our 24-hour helpline. We also have referral arrangements and collaborations with statutory organisations and other specialist organisations, including Relate, National Family Mediation, 4 Children and CAFCASS.

Supporting front line services

Our out of hours helpline and online services can support front line workers including General Practitioners, Health Visitors, Hospital Workers and the Police. This enables them to direct adult family members to free parenting support without adding any extra burden to their own organisation. Family support organisations that have a helpline operating within certain hours, can also contract with us so we can assist them to provide their out-of-hours helpline support.

Our reach and impact

Our free, 24 hour, confidential Parentline received over **100,000** calls in 2010. Our email support team responded to **6,780* parents** individually and our website was visited by over **750,000 unique users**. We delivered over **3,500 hours** of face-to-face individual or group based parenting support to parents and adult family members. Our services are set up by families for families, based on effective peer support. In 2010, trained volunteers, with first-hand experience of being parents or adult kinship carers themselves, delivered over **20,000** hours of support to other families in need. *in period between March 2009 and 2010

The most common problems around which parents seek support and advice from Parentline are*:

- Children's behavioural issues – **25%**
- Adult mental and emotional health issues – **46%**
- Children's issue relating to divorce – **13%**

*Parentline call data from 2010

In a self-reported survey of parents who used our services in 2010, respondents were asked to rate the impact of the Family Lives intervention they had received on their situation (1=very dissatisfied, 5=very satisfied). Parents reported that they felt more confident to deal with their situation (4.18); less lonely/isolated (4.20) and more able to communicate with their child (3.6) following the intervention.

We know that the most vulnerable families are often the least likely to seek help from traditional statutory services. In a recent customer satisfaction survey for Family Lives, of those that expressed a preference, 88.7 % of users said that they would prefer to receive parent and family support from a charity rather than a government body or private sector organisation. The consequences of these families unsupported, and their problems unresolved are significant and costly to individuals and society, both economically and socially. Family Lives performs well in terms of hard to reach groups. Our confidential nature, (except in cases of Risk of Harm) means that we are trusted and respected by parents reluctant to engage with statutory services.

"Family Lives is a really good support service to so many different age groups. From parents to Grandparents and all genders, they offer support to people who are emotionally struggling"

A cost effective investment

By being there for families when and where they most need us, our early intervention and round the clock availability means that families feel supported at all times. By giving families the tools that they need to help themselves, we believe that long lasting costs to government and to society, and personal harm to individuals can be reduced. These can be manifested in the following areas:

- Reduced anti social behaviour both inside and outside of the home

- Reduced mental health issues for parent and child

“They have brought me out of my low ebb a lot quicker than normal. I have learnt more about coping strategies. You make good friends with people who genuinely care. It was good getting out of the house, (I am) calmer in situations that stressed me before.

It’s good to see other people with similar problems. It’s nice to have lunch – at home I might not have lunch. It’s helped a lot with managing my kids” Parent, Gloucestershire Carers Group

- Reduced costs to schools – less disruptive behaviour and exclusions, and an enhanced chance of a child flourishing educationally and gaining employment
- Reduced costs to the justice sector - Police, Court, Probation, Victim and Prison costs
- Reduced costs relating to children being ‘looked after’ by the state, including less dependence on welfare payments
- Reduced hospital bills – less drink/drug/mental health referrals, less use of prescription drugs and reduced use of A&E admissions

- Reduced GP costs and an effective method of referral to a less costly service
- More chance that a child will learn positive rather than negative behaviour from their parents/carers, thus preventing a cycle of poor parenting in the future

Examples of our work

Our work in GPs’ surgeries in Gloucestershire

Family Lives received a 3-year grant to deliver a programme of flexible and accessible parenting support services to parents/carers within a primary healthcare setting. By working alongside local GPs and health professionals we are able to complement their work by supporting families who are vulnerable and in need of additional support outside of a clinical environment. This greatly improves efficiency, saving the time and money of trained health professionals. Families are referred via GPs and health-care teams, or engaged with through our continuing local outreach work. The project works with:

- Families living in isolated communities with limited access to services
- Families with teenagers and those struggling with their children’s risky behaviour such as substance misuse
- Low income families, homeless families, young parents, migrant families, families from ethnic minorities
- Families who suffer major losses such as divorce, separation and bereavement

Further work is being established in Hampshire where a 3-year project will see Family Lives working with another eight GPs’ surgeries across the county.

Our work in children’s centres across Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire

Family Lives is commissioned to provide external supervision to Parent and Family Support workers across Hertfordshire. Utilising our wealth of experience we provide regular individual and group supervision to external front line workers. Our Supervision service is a unique facility for key professional Children’s Centre staff. It enables them to feel supported, reduce their anxiety and increase confidence and skills in their work. Staff develop personally and professionally whilst evaluating issues affecting their practice. The service also facilitates an important forum for voluntary and statutory sector services to work collaboratively.

Family Lives is also delivering family support and engagement services within children's centres across Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire. This includes early intervention support services for teenage parents and targeted and specific work with fathers. We have a strong background in engaging disadvantaged and isolated families who are often excluded from mainstream services. Our engagement expertise is recognised by children's centres and the wider statutory sector.



Our work in schools in London

Family Lives has been working for several years to deliver family support in schools in the London Boroughs of Croydon, Camden, Brent and Wandsworth. A range of workshops or 3 to 5 week courses are adapted to suit the needs of the particular school and families. This work meets the needs of a highly diverse population, both ethnically and culturally.

By ensuring that the school and parents/carers are fully informed and supported we have engaged with large numbers of parents and sustained their attendance throughout. Our evaluation and monitoring processes have revealed a very high satisfaction rate with most parents asking for further involvement from Family Lives. They repeatedly identify an increase in their own confidence and an improvement in their children's behaviour.

How to Contact Us

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Phone: 0208 655 2402
07500 487 484

Parentline 0808 800 2222 call free from landlines and most mobile networks

Follow us on Twitter. @ www.twitter.com/familylives

Or visit our web sites
- www.familylives.org.uk
- www.familylives.org.uk/professionals